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APPLICATION NO.	FILING DATE	FIRST NAMED INVENTOR	ATTORNEY DOCKET NO.	CONFIRMATION NO.
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10/573,214

03/24/2006

Ayako Nanjyo

F-8958

5023

28107 7590 07/07/2010
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EXAMINER

TREYGER, ILYA Y

ART UNIT

PAPER NUMBER

3761

MAIL DATE

DELIVERY MODE

07/07/2010

PAPER

Please find below and/or attached an Office communication concerning this application or proceeding.

The time period for reply, if any, is set in the attached communication.

Office Action Summary	Application No.	Applicant(s)	
	10/573,214	NANJYO ET AL.	
	Examiner	Art Unit	
	ILYA Y. TREYGER	3761	

-- The MAILING DATE of this communication appears on the cover sheet with the correspondence address --

Period for Reply

A SHORTENED STATUTORY PERIOD FOR REPLY IS SET TO EXPIRE 3 MONTH(S) OR THIRTY (30) DAYS, WHICHEVER IS LONGER, FROM THE MAILING DATE OF THIS COMMUNICATION.

- Extensions of time may be available under the provisions of 37 CFR 1.136(a). In no event, however, may a reply be timely filed after SIX (6) MONTHS from the mailing date of this communication.
- If NO period for reply is specified above, the maximum statutory period will apply and will expire SIX (6) MONTHS from the mailing date of this communication.
- Failure to reply within the set or extended period for reply will, by statute, cause the application to become ABANDONED (35 U.S.C. § 133). Any reply received by the Office later than three months after the mailing date of this communication, even if timely filed, may reduce any earned patent term adjustment. See 37 CFR 1.704(b).

Status

- 1) ☒ Responsive to communication(s) filed on 12 February 2010.
- 2a) ☒ This action is **FINAL**. 2b) ☐ This action is non-final.
- 3) ☐ Since this application is in condition for allowance except for formal matters, prosecution as to the merits is closed in accordance with the practice under *Ex parte Quayle*, 1935 C.D. 11, 453 O.G. 213.

Disposition of Claims

- 4) ☒ Claim(s) 1-20 is/are pending in the application.
- 4a) Of the above claim(s) 2 is/are withdrawn from consideration.
- 5) ☐ Claim(s) _____ is/are allowed.
- 6) ☒ Claim(s) 1 and 3-20 is/are rejected.
- 7) ☐ Claim(s) _____ is/are objected to.
- 8) ☐ Claim(s) _____ are subject to restriction and/or election requirement.

Application Papers

- 9) ☐ The specification is objected to by the Examiner.
- 10) ☒ The drawing(s) filed on 24 March 2006 is/are: a) ☒ accepted or b) ☐ objected to by the Examiner.
Applicant may not request that any objection to the drawing(s) be held in abeyance. See 37 CFR 1.85(a).
Replacement drawing sheet(s) including the correction is required if the drawing(s) is objected to. See 37 CFR 1.121(d).
- 11) ☐ The oath or declaration is objected to by the Examiner. Note the attached Office Action or form PTO-152.

Priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119

- 12) ☒ Acknowledgment is made of a claim for foreign priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119(a)-(d) or (f).
- a) ☐ All b) ☐ Some * c) ☐ None of:
1. ☐ Certified copies of the priority documents have been received.
 2. ☐ Certified copies of the priority documents have been received in Application No. _____.
 3. ☒ Copies of the certified copies of the priority documents have been received in this National Stage application from the International Bureau (PCT Rule 17.2(a)).

* See the attached detailed Office action for a list of the certified copies not received.

Attachment(s)

- | | |
|--|---|
| 1) <input type="checkbox"/> Notice of References Cited (PTO-892) | 4) <input type="checkbox"/> Interview Summary (PTO-413) |
| 2) <input type="checkbox"/> Notice of Draftsperson's Patent Drawing Review (PTO-948) | Paper No(s)/Mail Date. _____ |
| 3) <input type="checkbox"/> Information Disclosure Statement(s) (PTO/SB/08) | 5) <input type="checkbox"/> Notice of Informal Patent Application |
| Paper No(s)/Mail Date _____ | 6) <input type="checkbox"/> Other: _____ |

DETAILED ACTION

1. Claims 1 and 4 are amended.
2. Claim 2 is canceled.
3. Claims 1 and 3-20 are examined on the merits.

Response to Arguments

4. Applicant's arguments filed 06/10/2009 have been fully considered but they are not persuasive:

With respect to claim 1, Applicant's argue that Shimoe does not disclose the claimed invention because the reference discloses a rounded shape of the absorbent body that does not provide the leakage retention in the sideways directions in contrast to a flat shape that claimed by the Applicants.

However, the round shape of the absorbent body does not preclude the leakage retention in the sideways directions, since appropriate liquid retention grooves are present.

In addition, due to its flexibility the absorbent body necessarily takes the flat shape when being in use.

Applicants further argue that the combination of references is improper because the reference of JP 2003230593 teaches lateral grooves that were not intended to perform liquid retention.

With regard to lateral positioning of JP 2003230593's grooves, the test for obviousness is not whether the features of a secondary reference may be bodily incorporated into the structure of the primary reference; nor is it that the claimed invention must be expressly suggested in any one or all of the references. Rather, the test is what the combined teachings of the references

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would have suggested to those of ordinary skill in the art. In the instant case the reference of JP 2003230593 has been brought here not for bodily incorporation into the invention of Shimoe, but as a teaching that it is known to make grooves formed in the absorbent article of equal walls.

Since interrelations of the groove's walls height does not affect the operation of the device, it would have been obvious to one having ordinary skill in the art at the time the invention was made to make the walls of liquid prevention grooves of Shimoe equal in height, as taught by JP 2003230593 in order to employ the conventionally known variation of the absorbent body grooves design as a matter of choice.

With regard to argument that grooves of JP 2003230593 were not intended to perform liquid retention, any groove formed on the absorbent body is fully capable of liquid retention due to its mechanical structure.

5. With respect to claim 4, Applicants argue that the Examiner's statement that the lines marked "W" are fully capable of being folding lines is improper because the reference does not teach the folded structure.

However, any article made of flexible material is fully capable of being folded in any deride place.

Claim Rejections - 35 USC § 103

6. The following is a quotation of 35 U.S.C. 103(a) which forms the basis for all obviousness rejections set forth in this Office action:

(a) A patent may not be obtained though the invention is not identically disclosed or described as set forth in section 102 of this title, if the differences between the subject matter sought to be patented and the prior art are such that the subject matter as a whole would have been obvious at the time the invention was made to a person

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having ordinary skill in the art to which said subject matter pertains. Patentability shall not be negated by the manner in which the invention was made.

7. The factual inquiries set forth in *Graham v. John Deere Co.*, 383 U.S. 1, 148 USPQ 459 (1966), that are applied for establishing a background for determining obviousness under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) are summarized as follows:

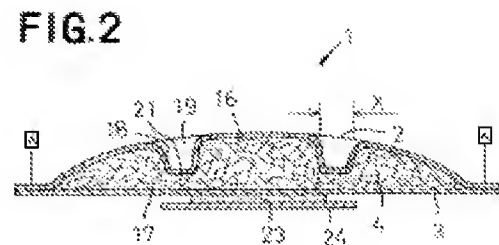
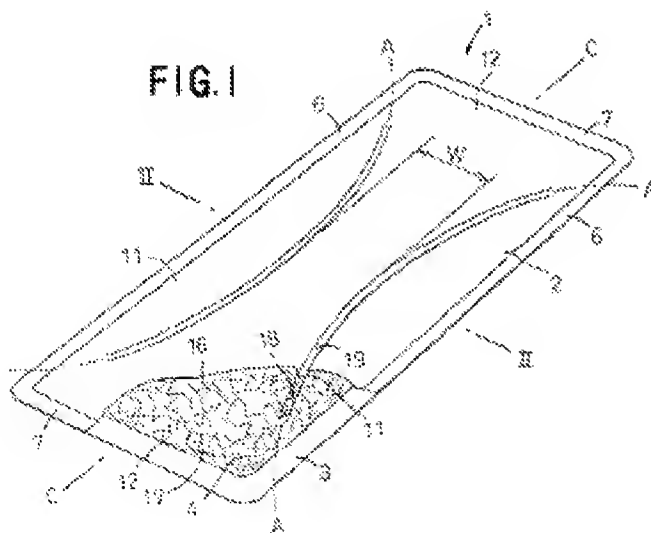
1. Determining the scope and contents of the prior art.
2. Ascertaining the differences between the prior art and the claims at issue.
3. Resolving the level of ordinary skill in the pertinent art.
4. Considering objective evidence present in the application indicating obviousness or nonobviousness.

8. This application currently names joint inventors. In considering patentability of the claims under 35 U.S.C. 103(a), the examiner presumes that the subject matter of the various claims was commonly owned at the time any inventions covered therein were made absent any evidence to the contrary. Applicant is advised of the obligation under 37 CFR 1.56 to point out the inventor and invention dates of each claim that was not commonly owned at the time a later invention was made in order for the examiner to consider the applicability of 35 U.S.C. 103(c) and potential 35 U.S.C. 102(e), (f) or (g) prior art under 35 U.S.C. 103(a).

9. Claims 1 and 3-20 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Shimoe et al. (US 6,867,345) in view of JP 2003230593.

10. In Re claims 1,3-4, 6, 10, 14, and 18, Shimoe discloses the sanitary napkin (absorbent article) 1 (Figs. 1 and 2) comprising a liquid-pervious topsheet 2 (Figs. 1 and 2), a liquid-impervious backsheet 3 (Figs. 1 and 2) and a liquid-absorbent core 4 (Figs. 1 and 2) disposed between the topsheet 2 and the backsheet 3 (Col. 3, ln. 3-6); the topsheet 2 is formed with a pair of second grooves (leakage preventing grooves) 19 depressed and curved in coincidence with the first grooves 18 (Col. 3, ln. 21-24; Figs. 1 and 2); wherein the leakage preventing grooves 19

(Fig. 2) are deeper than a thickness of the middle-height portion and reach the standard portion absorbent body and positioned about midway between the first and second middle-height portion longitudinal ends (See Fig. 2) and are fully capable of being considered as borders of the mid-portion of the middle-height portion on both longitudinally extending sides of the mid-portion; wherein the thinned portion A (Fig. 2) obtained by thinning the middle-height portion by press is formed on outsides of the leakage preventing grooves 19 (Fig. 2); wherein the middle-height portion is extending longitudinally to first and second middle-height portion longitudinal ends and is formed between front and rear lines W (Fig. 1) fully capable to be a folding lines for folding the absorbent article in three at the time of individual packaging; and wherein the thickness of the middle-height portion absorbent body is 1 to 15 mm (Col. 3, ln. 35, 36), what encompasses 1-3 mm as claimed (claims 6, 10, 14, and 18).

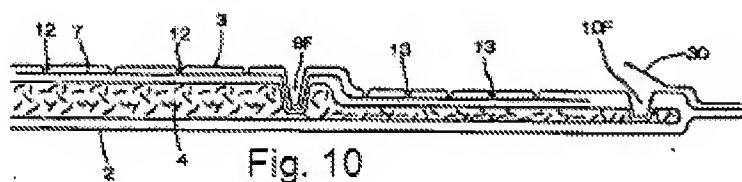


Shimoe does not expressly disclose that the absorbent article, comprises the absorbent body having opposing outer absorbent body edges extending in a longitudinal direction of the

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absorbent body; having a middle-height portion layered over the standard height portion, wherein the middle-height portion is in the form of the distinct step, and wherein the leakage preventing grooves comprise side walls equal in height.

JP 2003230593 teaches the absorbent article comprising the absorbent body having opposing outer absorbent body edges extending in a longitudinal direction of the absorbent body; having a middle-height portion laminated as a layer over the standard height portion, wherein the middle-height portion is in the form of the distinct step, and wherein the leakage preventing grooves comprise side walls equal in height.



Since interrelations of the groove's walls height does not affect the operation of the device, it would have been obvious to one having ordinary skill in the art at the time the invention was made to make the walls of liquid prevention grooves of Shimoe equal in height, as taught by JP 2003230593 in order to employ the conventionally known variation of the absorbent body grooves design as a matter of choice.

11. In Re claims 5 and 13, Shimoe in view of JP 2003230593 disclose the invention discussed above, but do not expressly disclose the particular parameter of the absorbent body standard-height portion thickness range.

The particular parameter of the of the absorbent body standard-height portion thickness range depends of the absorbent material has been used and affects the level of compactness while

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the article is being folded, and therefore is the matter of optimization as being result effective variable. It would have been obvious to one having ordinary skill in the art at the time the invention was made to use the claimed parameter of the of the absorbent body standard-height portion thickness range in order to reach the desired level of compactness, since it has been held that where the general conditions of a claim are disclosed in the prior art, discovering the optimum or workable ranges involves only routine skill in the art. *In re Aller*, 105 USPQ 233(MPEP 2144.05 (II-A)).

12. In Re claims 7-9, 11, 12, 15-17, 19, and 20, Shimoe in view of JP 2003230593 disclose the invention discussed above, but do not expressly disclose the particular parameter of the leakage preventing grooves dimensions range.

The particular parameter of the leakage preventing grooves dimensions range affects the liquid capacity of the grooves and therefore is the matter of optimization as being result effective variable. It would have been obvious to one having ordinary skill in the art at the time the invention was made to use the claimed parameter of the leakage preventing grooves dimensions range in order to reach desired liquid capacity of the grooves, since it has been held that where the general conditions of a claim are disclosed in the prior art, discovering the optimum or workable ranges involves only routine skill in the art. *In re Aller*, 105 USPQ 233(MPEP 2144.05 (II-A)).

Conclusion

13. Applicant's amendment necessitated the new ground(s) of rejection presented in this Office action. Accordingly, **THIS ACTION IS MADE FINAL**. See MPEP § 706.07(a). Applicant is reminded of the extension of time policy as set forth in 37 CFR 1.136(a).

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A shortened statutory period for reply to this final action is set to expire THREE MONTHS from the mailing date of this action. In the event a first reply is filed within TWO MONTHS of the mailing date of this final action and the advisory action is not mailed until after the end of the THREE-MONTH shortened statutory period, then the shortened statutory period will expire on the date the advisory action is mailed, and any extension fee pursuant to 37 CFR 1.136(a) will be calculated from the mailing date of the advisory action. In no event, however, will the statutory period for reply expire later than SIX MONTHS from the date of this final action.

Any inquiry concerning this communication or earlier communications from the examiner should be directed to ILYA Y. TREYGER whose telephone number is (571)270-3217. The examiner can normally be reached on 7:30-5:00.

If attempts to reach the examiner by telephone are unsuccessful, the examiner's supervisor, Tatyana Zalukaeva can be reached on 571-272-1115. The fax phone number for the organization where this application or proceeding is assigned is 571-273-8300.

Information regarding the status of an application may be obtained from the Patent Application Information Retrieval (PAIR) system. Status information for published applications may be obtained from either Private PAIR or Public PAIR. Status information for unpublished applications is available through Private PAIR only. For more information about the PAIR system, see <http://pair-direct.uspto.gov>. Should you have questions on access to the Private PAIR system, contact the Electronic Business Center (EBC) at 866-217-9197 (toll-free). If you would like assistance from a USPTO Customer Service Representative or access to the automated information system, call 800-786-9199 (IN USA OR CANADA) or 571-272-1000.

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/Ilya Y Treyger/

Examiner, Art Unit 3761

/Tatyana Zalukaeva/

Supervisory Patent Examiner, Art Unit 3761